

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ issues compliance order to Temple-Inland for fish kill

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality issued a compliance order and a notice of potential penalty to Temple-Inland, also known as the Bogalusa Paperboard Mill, for its role in a recent fish kill in Pearl River in Washington and St. Tammany parishes. The order outlines several violations which may lead to monetary fines for the facility.

Violations in the order include failure to notify timely of an emergency condition, permit exceedances, unauthorized discharge of pollutants including "black liquor," and discharges that led to a water body failing to meet its designated conditions which led to an extensive fish kill. It must also submit a plan that shows "long-term operation, maintenance and process changes to ensure repeat or similar incidents do not occur at this facility."

"This order sets the legal process in motion to issues penalties and ensure compliance with environmental regulations," said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. "This process will provide us with information as to why the facility did not respond in a timely manner. I can't stress this enough. If there's an emergency condition, someone must contact DEQ. While the investigation is on-going, it is important for the facility to operate, and operate in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment. That's why DEQ is actively engaged in reviewing start up plans and processes for the future."

DEQ's investigation is ongoing. According to the order, the Department's investigation is not yet complete, the but "inspections and file reviews have thus far revealed that on or about August 9, 2011, the Respondent experienced an upset with the multiple effect evaporator at the facility which led to the introduction of 'black liquor' into the wastewater treatment system. This substance was then discharged into the Pearl River."

Black Liquor is water that contains processed wood pulp that is used to make paper. It is produced by heating and adding sodium hydroxide, which has a high pH. This helps breakdown wood fibers, but also makes the fibers easily digested by bacteria in the water. The digestion robs oxygen of the water and suffocates fish.



